

# PRESS RELEASE

## House Armed Services Committee Duncan Hunter, Chairman

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CONTACT

Harald Stavenas

Meghan Wedd

(202) 225-2539

### OPENING REMARKS OF CHAIRMAN DUNCAN HUNTER *Hearing on Iraqi Violations of the Law of Armed Conflict*

This afternoon the committee will review the apparent violations of the Law of Armed Conflict by the Iraqi military.

It is a pleasure to welcome our witness this afternoon:

- Mr. W. Hays Parks  
Special Assistant to the Judge Advocate General for Law of War Matters  
Department of the Army

Sir, we look forward to your testimony.

The Law of Armed Conflict is a body of international law that governs the initiation and conduct of military operations. It consists of treaties, conventions, protocols and customary practices whose purpose is to protect non-combatants and facilitate the end of a conflict.

The United States, more than any other nation in history, conducts its military operations in strict compliance with the Law of Armed Conflict.

Our extensive use of precision guided munitions to destroy military targets while minimizing civilian casualties and the humane treatment of Iraqi prisoners of war and civilians bear witness to our commitment to these principles.

However, it is now clearly evident that the regime of Saddam Hussein holds no similar concern.

Since the start of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, there have been constant reports of Iraqi military and paramilitary forces violating the both the spirit and the letter of the Law of Armed Conflict.

There have been reports of Iraqi soldiers faking surrender in order to get close to U.S. forces, only to open fire once our troops approached.

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Last week, Marines took fire from a hospital, and after returning fire, captured the facility along with approximately 170 Iraqi soldiers, some 200 weapons and nearly 3,000 chemical suits.

There have been reports of Iraqis fighting in civilian clothes and using civilians as human shields.

All these are flagrant violations of the law.

But the most outrageous violation occurred during the weekend of March 22-23. A maintenance convoy moving forward to support the 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division was ambushed outside of Nasiryah. But shortly after the ambush, Al Jazeera, the Arab language television network, broadcast an Iraqi TV video showing the dead American soldiers, some with a single bullet hole in the head. These scenes prompted DOD officials to state that they believed that some of these soldiers had been executed by Iraqi forces. One, PFC Jessica Lynch, was successfully rescued last Tuesday and we applaud her courage and fortitude as well as the courage and skill of the forces who conducted this daring operation.

I, and all Americans, deplore this flagrant violation of the Laws of Armed Conflict. While they will in no way alter the way we treat Iraqi prisoners, neither will they deter us from finding those responsible for this heinous conduct and bringing them to justice once this conflict is over.

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